

# INJURY PREVENTION NEWS

August 2001

Indian Health Service, Reno District Office of Environmental Health

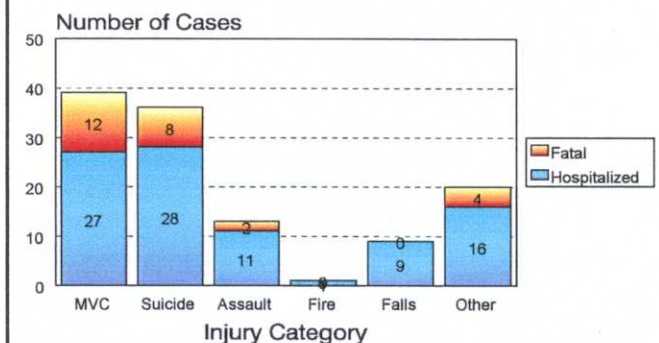
Volume 2, Issue 3

## Fort Duchesne Summer Intern Describes Trends in Injury

By Dave Cramer

Annually, the Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health and Engineering sponsors undergraduate student internships on Indian Reservations. This year in Fort Duchesne, Utah, Mr. Justin Gerding spent the better part of his internship completing a descriptive study of injury trends among Native Americans living in the Uintah & Ouray Indian Reservation. The study compiled 120 cases with a severe injury diagnosis resulting in a fatality or hospital stay from 1996 to 2000. The data confirmed that motor vehicle related crash injuries are a leading cause of injury death and disability among tribal members. What was surprising, however, was the tremendous number of suicide attempts and completions on the reservation (See graph below). The suicide completion rate for the U&O Reservation is 5 times the national average.

### Distribution of Injury/Deaths 1996-2000



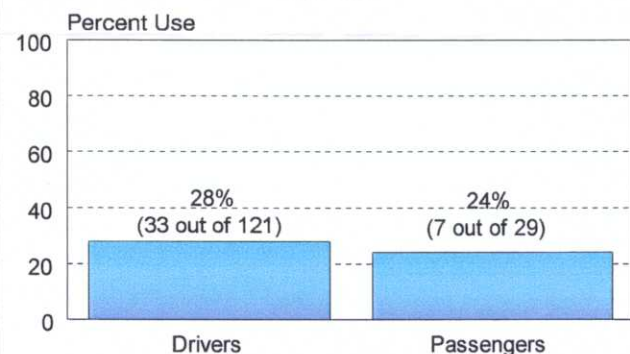
After developing a picture of the overall injury trend, the study profiled motor vehicle crash (MVC) injuries on the reservation. Tribal members in their late teens and early twenties were involved in MVC more than any other age group. Females were injured in roughly equal proportions in this age group as males. Females were hospitalized in similar numbers as males, but twice as many males were killed in motor vehicle crashes.

Where the seat belt status was reported (N=7), the data show that no male victims were wearing seat belts at the time of the crash, whereas 50% of the female victims were restrained. This may explain why more males were killed in MVC than females. Alcohol, where reported, was involved in 80% of all fatal crashes. However, data is based on a subjective assessment and does not indicate influence of alcohol or level of impairment.

In addition to data collection through a records review, observational surveys conducted as part of this study showed 28% of observed reservation drivers use seat belts. This is consistent with previous surveys that have been conducted on the reservation.

### U&O Seat Belt Survey Results

July 2001



Several recommendations for potential injury prevention interventions are 1) Share the data on suicide attempts and completions with mental health personnel and the Health Board, 2) Continue efforts to prevent motor vehicle crash injuries, given that seat belts can increase the odds of surviving a crash by 50%, 3) Encourage local police departments to enforce Utah's occupant restraint law, 4) Consider passing a primary seatbelt law on the reservation, and 5) Encourage local police to conduct sobriety checkpoints on the reservation.

### In this Issue

Ft. Duchesne Injury Trends	1
In the Spotlight	2
Elko Highlights	3
RSIC IP Program	3
Upcoming Training	3
Staff Changes	4

## Office of Environmental Health Staff Changes

By Holly Billie

There have been changes in staff at the Reno District Office and at the Phoenix Area Office of Environmental Health the past few months. Future issues of *Injury Prevention News* will feature some of the new staff members.

**Doug Akin**, District Environmental Health Officer (EHO) retired in July after more than 20 years of service. A retirement party was held for Doug in Reno on July 18. Good luck to Doug as he embarks on a new retirement "career".

**Vince Garcia**, Service Unit EHO, left Reno for a job as the District EHO in Phoenix. Vince's contribution to the tribes within the district were outstanding. He will

be missed but we wish him the best in his new job.

**Andrea Horn**, Service Unit EHO, has been selected as the new Schurz Service Unit EHO (Vince's former position). Andrea will start her job in October. She will be featured "In the Spotlight" in the next issue of *Injury Prevention News*.

**Kenny Hicks**, former Western District Injury Prevention Coordinator, has been selected as the Phoenix Area Injury Prevention Specialist. Kenny brings a wealth of Injury Prevention experience to his new job.

**Dave McMahon**, Institutional Environmental Control Officer, served as the Acting Area Injury Prevention Specialist for the past 8 months. Thanks to Dave for an excellent job.

**Mike Welch**, former Western District EHO, has been selected as the Phoenix Area Division of Environmental Health Services Director. Mike will serve as the Acting Reno District EHO until the position is filled.



## Elko Service Unit Highlights

By Debi Meek

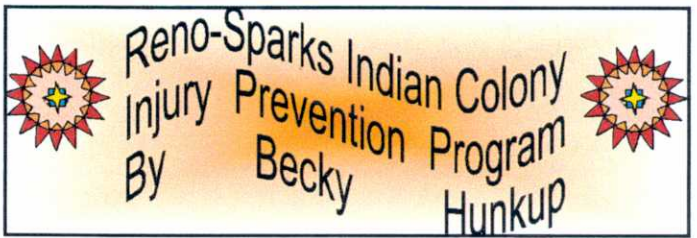
*Elko Car Seat Safety Clinic*—A car seat safety clinic was held on June 12, 2002, at the Elko Indian Colony to provide parents education on the proper use of child car safety seats as outlined by the manufacturer. Fifteen child passenger seats were given to children and correctly installed. Parents also brought in their car seats for safety inspections. Nevada Highway Patrol Officers supported our efforts by serving as our senior checkers. Volunteers from the Owyhee Community Wellness Program and Elko helped make this a successful event.

*Southern Bands Car Seat Program*—Southern Bands Health Center provides infant/toddler car seats to parents of newborns delivered through the contract care facilities within the Elko Service Unit area of Indian Health Service. The goal of this community-based intervention is to reduce serious motor vehicle crash injuries in American Indian Communities. Motor vehicle fatalities are the third leading cause of injury death in the age group 0 - 1 year. Be a role model. Always buckle up.

*Boost America Update*—Since the arrival of the Evenflo Right Fit Booster Seats and Century Booster Seats in April, approximately 133 booster seats were distributed in the communities of Battle Mountain, Wells, South Fork, Ft. McDermitt, Duck Water, Duck Valley, Goshute, and Elko. The Evenflo seats are designed to hold children 40 to 80 lbs and 30 to 80 lbs for the Century Booster Seats. A booster seat simply raises a child several inches higher than the vehicle's seat so the vehicle's lap/shoulder belt fits properly. Older kids who have outgrown their convertible seat and not quite ready for the vehicle safety belts should use a booster seat. These booster seats are free thanks to Boost America! If you would like to receive a booster seat for your child contact your local Environmental Health Officer.

*Sleep Safe*—The Head Start Centers in Elko, Owyhee, and McDermitt applied and were selected to participate in the Sleep Safe Program for 2001-2002. The program will provide photoelectric smoke detectors to each Head Start to distribute to Head Start families during the school year. Training curriculum on fire prevention will also be implemented at each Head Start Center. The goal of Sleep Safe is to decrease fire and burn injuries in American Indian and Alaska Native children ages 0-5 years to half the National average by the year 2010. This goal can be achieved through increasing the use of operable smoke detectors, providing fire safety curriculum to Head Start programs aimed at increasing awareness, pro-

moting the development and implementation of tribal laws requiring home fire safety codes, and providing a vital link among other fire safety resources available in the community.



Have you ever heard of such a thing as a Halloween masquerade pow wow in the summer? On August 2, 2001, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) Injury Prevention Program presented such an event called "Halloween Masquerade in the Summer Pow Wow—Celebrating a Safe Summer". Johnny Christy, summer intern, spearheaded the event. Over 350 community residents attended wearing crazy pow wow outfits such as a mirror dress instead of a jingle dress and women wearing bustles and feathers. Contest winners won monies donated by tribal programs and community residents. Having a safe summer was the theme of this event. The Tribal Alcohol and Drug Program gave information on driving safely; the Girl Scouts provided information on camping safety and gave away first aid kits; Sierra Pacific Gas and Electric Company gave information on gas and electric safety and Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) had information on child safety seats. The RSIC Injury Prevention Program conducted a safety walk (similar to a cake walk) where baskets containing smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, flashlights, etc., were given away as prizes. It was a fun event. We wish to thank the RSIC Tribal Council for their support and tribal departments and the community who contributed items and money for prizes.

## Upcoming Injury Prevention Training

Nevada Office of Traffic Safety Child Passenger Safety Course, September 7 & 8, and October 5 & 6, 2001, Reno. Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) is conducting the course. Contact Kristi Smith at 775.858.5700.

Child Passenger Safety Technician Training, Las Vegas, NV, October 22-26, 2001. Contact Jeanne Cosgrove at 702.731.8666.

Nevada Elementary Traffic Safety Program Instructor Course, September 20-22, 2001, Reno. Contact Bruce Mackey at 775.687.4229.



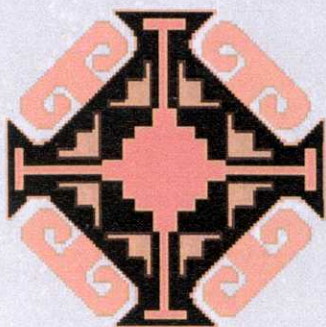
## Injury Prevention Contacts

Holly Billie, IP Coordinator  
Office of Environmental Health  
1395 Greg Street, Suite 101  
Sparks, NV 89431  
(775) 784-5327 ext. 236  
email: holly.billie@mail.ihs.gov

Dave Cramer, EHO  
Uintah & Ouray Service Unit  
Office of Environmental Health  
P.O. Box 489  
Fort Duchesne, UT 84026  
(435) 722-3912  
email: david.cramer@mail.ihs.gov

Debi Meek, EHS  
Elko Service Unit  
Office of Environmental Health  
515 Shoshone Circle  
Elko, NV 89801  
(775) 738-2252  
email: dmeek@phxel.phoenix.ihs.gov

Becky Hunkup, IP Coordinator  
Reno-Sparks Indian Colony  
34 Reservation Road  
Reno, NV 89502  
(775) 329-5162 ext. 234  
Becky\_injury@hotmail.com

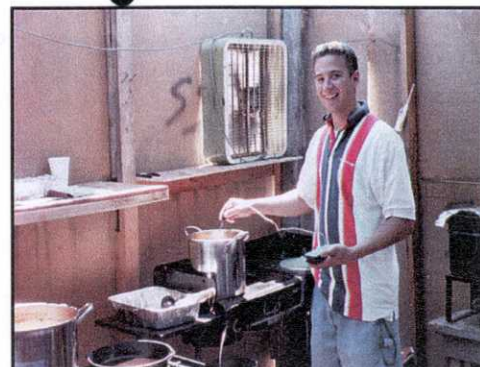


## In the Spotlight:

## Summer Interns



By Holly Billie - Kristen Campbell joined the Reno District Office staff for the summer as part of the COSTEP Intern Program in Injury Prevention. From Austin, Texas, Kristen is a senior at Eastern Kentucky University majoring in Environmental Health. She completed a COSTEP internship last year with IHS on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Kristen saw quite a bit of Nevada the first few weeks in Reno, traveling to clinics throughout the Schurz Service Unit delivering booster seats for the Boost America Program. Kristen's main project was to complete a resource manual for the Child Passenger Safety Training developed by Reno District. In addition to working on the CPS manual Kristen traveled to Owens Valley, California and Elko, Nevada to gather injury data, set up and enter data into the EPI Info Program, and conduct occupant restraint surveys. Since the Reno District was short-staffed this summer Kristen also helped with installing new office computers, helped conduct a survey on a day care center, and responded to environmental health complaints from the field. The Reno staff enjoyed and appreciated having Kristen to work with as she was willing to work hard and always had a friendly disposition and a great attitude. With those qualities Kristen will no doubt have a successful career in Environmental Health.



By Dave Cramer—The Ft. Duchesne Office of Environmental Health has been fortunate to have Justin Gerding as an intern over the past three months. Justin comes from Big Rapids, Michigan where he's a senior at Ferris State University majoring in Environmental Health. Over the summer Justin saw some of the best of the American Southwest. He biked the narrows at Zion National Park, viewed the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and took in a Diamondbacks' ballgame in Phoenix. In addition to the fun there's been a lot of work. Justin has been involved with a variety of environmental health activities including inspections of powwows in Ft. Duchesne and Cedar City, presentations of safety information to health center employees and investigations of water and food complaints. His major project, however, has been the development of an injury profile for the Uintah & Ouray Service Unit (described on page 1). Justin has been a complete professional addressing each project with thoughtful determination. He's also been a great sport like the time when he drove the convertible for Miss Ute Tribe in Roosevelt's July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. Justin has been an awesome addition to the Office of Environmental Health, and we'll miss his dedication when he heads back for his final year in school. Thanks Justin for all your work!